

Security number. HR 3218 will help protect millions of Americans from the devastating crime of identity theft, which is a growing problem in my district and throughout the country.

This bill will be partially helpful to senior citizens who rely on Social Security. These seniors could lose a lifetime's worth of savings if a criminal obtained their Social Security number. We owe it to America's senior citizens to make sure that they are not exposed to the risk of identity theft as a price of receiving their Social Security benefits.

While this bill does represent a good step toward protecting privacy, I would remind my colleagues that much more needs to be done to ensure the Social Security number is not used as means of facilitating identity crimes. The increasing prevalence of identity theft is directly related to the use of the Social Security number as a uniform identifier.

For all intents and purposes, the Social Security number is already a national identification number. Today, in the majority of states, no American can get a job, open a bank account, get a drivers' license, or receive a birth certificate for one's child without presenting their Social Security number. So widespread has the use of the Social Security number become that a member of my staff had to produce a Social Security number in order to get a fishing license!

Unscrupulous people have found ways to exploit this system and steal another's identity—the ubiquity of the Social Security number paved the way for these very predictable abuses and crimes. Congress must undo the tremendous injury done to the people's privacy and security by the federal government's various mandates which transformed the Social Security number into a universal identifier.

In order to stop the disturbing trend toward the use of the Social Security number as a uniform ID I have introduced the Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act (HR 220), which forbids the use of the Social Security number for purposes not related to Social Security. The Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act also contains a blanket prohibition on the use of identifiers to "investigate, monitor, oversee, or otherwise regulate" American citizens. Mr. Speaker, prohibiting the Federal Government from using standard identifiers will help protect Americans from both private and public sector criminals.

While much of the discussion of identity theft and related threats to privacy has concerned private sector criminals, the major threat to privacy lies in the power uniform identifiers give to government officials. I am sure I need not remind my colleagues of the sad history of government officials of both parties using personal information contained in IRS or FBI files against their political enemies, or of the cases of government officials rummaging through the confidential files of celebrities and/or their personal acquaintances, or of the Medicare clerk who sold confidential data about Medicare patients to a Health Maintenance Organization. After considering these cases, one cannot help but shudder at the potential for abuse if an unscrupulous government official is able to access one's complete medical, credit, and employment history by simply typing the citizens' "uniform identifier" into a database.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I enthusiastically join in supporting HR 3218 which will help protect millions of senior citizens and other Americans from identity theft by strengthening the confidentiality of the Social Security number. I also urge my colleagues to protect all Americans from the threat of national identifiers by supporting my Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. THOMAS M. BARRETT

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 18, 2000

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote earlier this evening on measures before the House because I was in transit to Washington from Wisconsin. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall No. 531, concerning a resolution (H. Res. 631) honoring the members of the crew of the guided missile destroyer U.S.S. *Cole*. I would have voted "aye" on Rollcall No. 532, concerning a resolution (H. Con. Res. 415) expressing the sense of the Congress that there should be established a National Children's Memorial Day. I would have voted "aye" on rollcall No. 533, concerning the Social Security Number Confidentiality Act (H.R. 3218).

HONORING MS. RHONDA GERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AID TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 18, 2000

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize and pay tribute to Rhonda Gerson, Executive Director of Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse, for her service on behalf of domestic violence victims.

A 1998 report by the U.S. Department of Justice indicates that the rate of domestic violence in many categories has been declining over the past decade. I believe the downward trend is directly attributable to the outreach efforts by such individuals as Rhonda Gerson.

Ms. Gerson has been the Executive Director of Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse since 1981. For the first five years, she served in this capacity without ever receiving a paycheck. During her time with the agency, Ms. Gerson has advocated for the safety of battered women on a local, state and national level.

In the early 1980s, Ms. Gerson served on a Houston Police Department (HPD) task force to review its domestic violence policy, and, in the late 1980s, she served on a second task force, which resulted in the creation of the HPD Family Violence Unit. In 1984, Ms. Gerson co-chaired a pilot project at the Harris County District Attorney's Office that ultimately developed into the Family Criminal Law Division. In 1987, the National Council of Jewish Women—Greater Houston Section awarded

her the Hannah G. Solomon Award as a result of her leadership and action for social change in the area of domestic violence victims/survivors.

Ms. Gerson was actively involved with the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV), and from 1989 to 1994, she was the chair of the Board of Directors. Under her leadership, TCFV grew to be the largest state coalition in the country due to it stepping up to the plate and re-opening the National Domestic Violence Hotline when its closure stunned the domestic violence community.

According to Deborah Tucker, current Executive Director of the National Training Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence and former Executive Director of TCFV, Ms. Gerson was an integral part of the Public Policy Committee for TCFV and made an incredible contribution to the laws and policies designed to better protect battered women and to hold offenders accountable. When asked to describe Ms. Gerson's accomplishments, Ms. Tucker said, "I think she is a person who is capable of both seeing the big picture and of noticing the impact that public policy initiatives and programs might have on one individual. Her sensitivity and native intelligence are among the most developed of any persons I have known. She stands out in a quiet and deliberate way, through hard work and thoughtful consideration of the complexities involved in human behavior."

In 1993, Ms. Gerson was appointed by Supreme Court Justice Tom Phillips as a member of the Texas team to attend the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Conference on confronting violence in the family. She was a leader in the effort to create the Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, for which she has served as Treasurer of the Board since 1997.

In 1998, Ms. Gerson helped found the National Training Center on Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence, and she currently serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors. In only two years, she has helped the agency to grow to six staff members and an operating budget of over \$600,000.

Mr. Speaker, many victims of domestic violence have been touched by Rhonda Gerson's compassionate spirit. I ask my colleagues to join with me in commending Ms. Gerson for a lifetime of dedication and commitment to the Houston community and to all victims of domestic violence.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER CONFIDENTIALITY ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 17, 2000

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I submit the following exchange of letters between myself and Chairman ARCHER regarding H.R. 3218:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, October 17, 2000.

Hon. DAN BURTON,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I understand that you have requested that H.R. 3218, the "Social Security Number Confidentiality Act of 1999," be scheduled for consideration on the House floor under suspension of the Rules. H.R. 3218 would ensure that Social Security numbers (SSNs) do not appear on or through the unopened mailings of Treasury checks. The bill as introduced was referred to the Committee on Government Reform.

As you know, the Committee on Ways and Means has jurisdiction over "National Social Security." The use of the SSN within the government sector falls within that subject matter jurisdiction, and the Committee has legislated in the past on the issue of the use of the SSN and its display. In fact a provision related to H.R. 3218 is found in section 101 of H.R. 4857, the Social Security Privacy and Identity Protection Act of 2000, which was ordered favorably reported by the Committee on Ways and Means on September 29, 2000. Accordingly, I have confirmed the Committee on Ways and Means has a valid claim on H.R. 3218.

Notwithstanding this determination, and in order to expedite consideration of this important time-sensitive legislation, I have no objection to its consideration by the House at this time. This is being done with the understanding that the Committee on Ways and Means will be treated without prejudice with respect to its jurisdictional rights during future consideration of this or similar legislation in the future.

I would further request that you include a copy of this letter in the RECORD, as well as your written response. With warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

BILL ARCHER,
CHAIRMAN.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC, October 17, 2000.

Hon. BILL ARCHER,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter of October 17, in which you stated that your Committee would not be asserting jurisdiction over H.R. 3218, the Social Security Number Confidentiality Act.

As you know, your decision not to assert jurisdiction over this matter will help expedite consideration of this important legislation. I look forward to working with you on this and other issues throughout the remainder of the 106th Congress.

Sincerely,

DAN BURTON,
CHAIRMAN.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD STOP ITS STATE TERRORISM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 18, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, on September 27, a letter from the Council of Khalistan was

published in the Washington Times. It details the propaganda spread by the Indian government to discredit its opponents.

That propaganda is necessary for the Indian government to cover up the atrocities and state terrorism against Christians, Sikhs, and other minorities. Former Indian cabinet minister R.L. Bhatia admitted in 1995 that the Indian government is spending "large sums of money" to spread this propaganda and influence affairs in the United States.

Earlier this month, militant Hindu fundamentalists attacked the home of a priest. They beat him and his neighbor. The neighbor was beaten so badly that he died. Unfortunately, this kind of thing is not unusual. It is just the latest in a series of atrocities carried out by organizations under the umbrella of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), the parent organization of the ruling BJP. While Prime Minister Vajpayee was in New York during his recent visit to the U.S., he said, "I will always be a Swayamsewak."

Last week, former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar said that there is no difference between the ruling BJP and the supposedly secular Congress Party. Unfortunately, from the point of view of the minorities in India, it is true. There is no difference. Whoever is in power, the repression continues. India has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, over 200,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947, over 70,000 Kashmiri Muslims since 1988, and tens of thousands of Dalit "untouchables" and other minorities. Thousands of Sikhs and other minorities are in illegal detention without charge or trial simply because they are opposed to the government, or because they are members of a minority.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for India to stop its state terrorism against the minorities within its borders. We must stop American aid to India and declare our support for self-determination for the people of Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagalim, and the other nations seeking their freedom, in the form of a free and fair democratic plebiscite. These measures are the only ones we can take that will help to bring real freedom and democracy to the people of South Asia.

I would like to submit the Council of Khalistan's letter into the RECORD for the information of my colleagues.

[From The Washington Times, Wed. Sept. 27, 2000]

NO MILITANTS IN THE COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN

Manpreet Singh Nibber's Sept. 16 letter, "India human rights criticism from unreliable source?" is so full of disinformation that he must be fronting for the Indian Embassy in its effort to confuse the American people.

Mr. Nibber, who is a member of the Punjab Welfare Council of the USA, does not address any of the facts we brought up in our last letter. Instead, he spreads Indian disinformation about the Council of Khalistan and its origins. He knows there are no "militants" involved in the council. We consistently support the liberation of Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on Oct. 7, 1987, by democratic, nonviolent means through the Sikh tradition of "Shantmai morcha," or peaceful agitation.

The Indian Embassy has interfered in American elections, calling for the re-election of former Sen. Larry Pressler and at-

tempting to damage the re-election campaign of Sen. Robert Torricelli. A few years ago, the Indian Embassy was caught giving illegal campaign donations to members of Congress through an immigration lawyer named Lalit Gadhia, who pleaded guilty to the scheme in federal court.

There are many other Gadhias throughout this country. Former Indian cabinet minister R.L. Bhatia admitted in a 1995 news conference that the Indian government is spending "large sums of money" through the embassy to influence American politics. But what is that money defending?

On Sept. 8, militant Hindus attacked the home of a priest and beat the priest and his servant. The servant was so severely beaten that he died of the injuries. On Aug. 25, news stories reported that militant Hindu nationalists kidnapped and tortured a priest in Gujarat, then paraded him naked through town. This attack was part of a wave of terror against Christians since Christmas 1998.

Incidents have included the murder of priests, the rape of nuns and the burning to death of a missionary and his two sons in their van by members of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), the parent organization of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. Schools and prayer halls have been attacked and destroyed. The individuals who raped the nuns were described by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a militant organization within the RSS, as "patriotic youth." The RSS was founded in support of fascism.

In March, 35 Sikhs were murdered in the village of Chithi Singhpora in Kashmir. Two extensive independent investigations, one conducted by the Movement Against State Repression and the Punjab Human Rights Organization and another conducted by the Ludhiana-based International Human Rights Organization, proved that the Indian government was responsible for this massacre.

The Indian government has murdered more than 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, according to figures published in Inderjit Singh Jaijee's "The Politics of Genocide." India also has killed more than 200,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947, more than 70,000 Kashmiri Muslims since 1988 and tens of thousands of other minorities. Amnesty International reports that thousands of political prisoners are being held without charge or trial in "the world's largest democracy."

India is hostile to the United States. It votes against America at the United Nations more often than any country except Cuba.

In May 1999, the Indian Express reported that Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes led a meeting with Cuba, China, Iraq, Serbia, Russia and Libya to construct a security alliance "to stop the U.S."

India openly supported the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Its nuclear weapons test started the nuclear arms race in South Asia. It refuses to allow the Sikhs, Kashmiris, Christians and other minority nations seeking their freedom to decide their political future in a free and fair vote, the democratic way.

America must not accept this kind of brutality and tyranny from a government that claims to be democratic. We must cut off aid and trade to India and support a free and fair plebiscite to ensure human rights and self-determination for Khalistan, Christian Nagalim, Kashmir and all the minority nations and peoples living under Indian rule.